2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

not likely to pass unnoticed in an area in which seasonal changes are so pronounced. There are also a series of words, such as *lushingwa*, 'the giddiness of a man who is hungry', which describe the different effects underfeeding is recognized as producing.

The relation between food and a fat body is dimly recognized, although it has been stated that very few Bemba put on much weight except adolescent girls and some old chiefs. I have heard one or two natives say that food made flesh and that a man who drank much beer would grow fat, but I do not think that diet alone is held responsible for such a condition. A fat body is considered a sign of prosperity and also a state of good luck. Wasting (*ukuonda*) is recognized as a form of illness, but there is nearly always the assumption that this state is due to witchcraft or the revenge of a haunting spirit, whereas a fat and shining body shows the reverse. It betokens the man of substance and success who has kept the forces of darkness at bay, as well as the man who is well fed. There is, therefore, a definite association between the idea of plenty, a well-covered body, and the protection from sorcery. (Cf. also foot-note, p. 58.)

Most natives will give quite a full account of the digestive system. Their theory is based on anatomical knowledge derived from cutting up animals, plus their own subjective sensations during and after eating. Thus they will describe the passage of food from the mouth to the stomach (*icifu*), the intestines (*malo*), the rectum (*inufwinga*), and its ejection as faeces (*amafi*), although they are unaware of the functions of the liver or the pancreas. But in speaking of the digestion of different foods they lay the greatest stress on the factors of which their direct personal experience has made them aware. These are chiefly three: the ease with which the foods are swallowed; the sensations they produce in the stomach, i.e. whether they melt quickly inside (*ukusunguluka*) or remain hard (*ukukosa pa munda*) or give a pain (*ukukalipa pa munda*); or whether they have good lasting power, that is to say, whether a long time elapses between the meal and the next pangs of hunger. Foods recognized as being slow to digest or 'remaining hard in the stomach' are often described as having greater lasting power than those which 'melt' quickly.

All Bemba grade their different foodstuffs in order of preference, and it is probably the habit of eating one relish at a time which enables them to do so with such clarity. The European cannot

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

new grain is ripe? Why does one woman serve out porridge so that every one gets up quickly feeling satisfied, while the guests of another eat and still feel empty? The answer is magic (*ubwanga*). Food, and millet in particular, is specially subject to witchcraft (*ubuloshi*). Wizards stick horns in their granaries to attract the grain of other men. They also send out mysterious black birds (*mawa*) at night to steal the food of neighbours and convey it to their own granaries. How does this happen? The Bemba answers that he does not know, but that it is a well-known fact that wizards have more food than other men. A more subtle form of sorcery takes the goodness out of the millet while it is still growing in the gardens, so that when it is reaped and eaten it has no power to satisfy a hungry man. To protect himself against these dangers counter-magic is the gardener's only hope, and even without definitely suspecting witchcraft, all the Bemba I questioned told me that food could not be expected to last unless some magic of durability had been performed—a magic rite that would keep the granary full (*ukuisula pe na pe*) and would act upon the food so that one little eating pot would satisfy a family instead of two, and 'the little bit of porridge give strength to the heart' (*akabwali kalekosho mutima*).

All these results are produced by the Bemba charm *icibyalilo*, still almost universally used to-day. The form of the charm varies from family to family although there are certain common elements, such as the doctoring of the grain with medicine smoked through it (*ukufutikila*) or by sprinkling (*ukusansa*), the mixing of the old harvest with the new to maintain continuity, and some rite of sympathetic magic by which people are made to feel full with the new grain in order that this property of satisfaction may be conferred on the rest of the crop. All sorts of intermediate forms exist, and the fact that Christian women sometimes sign themselves with the cross before reaping to make the food last shows how strong is this belief that nothing but supernatural aid can carry a woman safely through the hazards of Bemba catering.

The full *icibyalilo* rites are complex and take place in three stages. At sowing, the medicinal herb (*umuti*), sometimes mixed with an activating principle like scrap iron or a piece of rubber, is mixed with the seeds that are sown and sometimes a small portion is buried in the centre of the field or little fire-stands built there for the cooking of the new grain at the approaching harvest. At

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

his supplies indefinitely. To-day the big chiefs make proper gardens every two years (*ukutema pakalamba*), and fill enormous granaries which they reckon to last for two seasons or more. They definitely do not try to produce the maximum amount of food possible each year as the following table shows.[1] It appears that

Annual Cultivation by Four Chiefs

1 = Full cultivation. ½ = Small gardens.
0 = No cultivation. .. = No records obtained.

	1926	1927	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933
Citimukulu	..	..	..	..	..	1	½	1
Nkula	1	0	1	½	½	1	0	½
Mwamba	..	1	0	Village moved	0	1	½	½
Nkolemfumu	..	..	..	..	..	1	0	0

this was always the custom even when labour was easier to get. Thus the *mfumu* had about four times as much food accumulated as a commoner, but there was not a much greater difference than this between them. In any case the difference in wealth was a difference in power to distribute, not in the amount possessed.

The position of the commoner is different. Not only has he no reason to accumulate beyond a certain point, sufficient to give him enough to eat and to distribute in a small way, but he is also afraid to do so. To be much better off than his fellows would be dangerous. A man who is full when others are hungry is hardly considered to have achieved the good fortune by natural means. An occasional stroke of good luck is not resented, but to be permanently much more prosperous than the rest of the village would almost certainly lead to accusations of sorcery.[1] It might also be thought presumptuous (*icilumba*), an aping of the chief, and it would certainly cause a number of elderly female relatives to come and claim support from the lucky man. For these reasons the Bemba not only aims at a very modest competence, but he usually denies that he is as well off as he is. Unlike the Trobriand Islanders who boast about the fullness of their yam stores, the Bemba invariably denies that he has any food at all: 'We've simply swept the granary clean' (*twapyangafye*!) is his usual comment.[2]

[1] One of the reasons witchcraft is so much more common in urban areas where inequality in wealth is so much more striking.

[2] Compare the structure of the Trobriand granary designed to reveal the

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

and in the case of a big village the circular strip of land surrounding the houses is only barely adequate to give each his due. The same desire to avoid quarrelling over land is still apparent, but fixed rules govern its selection. The site of a man's *mputa* is determined by the position of his hut. When a village is being built the old men have the first right to choose where they will build their huts. After that the young men group themselves—usually together at one end of the village. The strip of ground behind each hut on the outside ring is the property of the owner of the house. Those who have built in the centre of the village must cultivate beyond. The owners of the outside houses are allowed to cultivate as far as the nearest natural boundary, such as a river or path, if they desire to do so, otherwise they must announce where they intend to stop so that others can cultivate beyond them.

The village plan on p. 177 shows how owners A, A5, B, B4, B9, C, C7, D, D3, D6, F, F2 cultivate ground immediately behind their huts while the others have strips farther out into the bush.

At first sight it is difficult to understand how the conflicting aims and ambitions of each individual can be satisfied in practice. But it must be remembered that a Bemba, cultivating alone, cannot hope to dig up more than a certain amount of land, and he estimates his capabilities in the coming year with fair precision, as do also his neighbours. But his own conception of good form seems to weigh with him more than such purely economic considerations. He does not want to appear presumptuous, or to make claims beyond his status. It is bad for a young man to demand as much ground as an old, even if he occupies an outside hut, or for a single woman to fix wide boundaries to her patch. Fear of the accusation of pride (*icilumba*) or that reputation for personal ambition, which is so often associated with charges of witchcraft in this society, are important factors in fixing the limits of village beds, and the whole division seems to be arranged without much formal allocation. A man estimates his neighbour's intentions and gauges public opinion as to his own status, and acts accordingly. He does not even put boundaries (*mpaka*) between his beds and those of another for fear of accusations of sorcery, and if there is a doubtful issue it can be taken for granted that personal relations and questions of relative status are always put before agricultural considerations. I have seen at least two cases where a man considered that his privilege had been infringed upon, but decided

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

said, "*Yangwe!* Hunger will catch us!" So we planted every seed at once.'

As a contrast to this inefficient cultivation, I found in these communities one or two natives more skilled in Bemba agriculture than any one else in the country. One cultivator, himself an artisan at work in Kasama, taught me more about Bemba agriculture than I learnt from any one else, and had a larger strip of land under cultivation than would have been possible in an ordinary village. He profited from his fellows' constant movement and lack of interest in their gardens. The few men who were paying labour were also making experiments on a more daring scale than would have been usual elsewhere. Lastly, several old women, entirely without support of male relatives, which would rarely have happened in an ordinary village, were hoeing with an energy thought frenzied by their fellows 'because of their hunger'. This individual variation in cultivation is, I think, characteristic of the modern Bemba community. It is not only that an individual household economy is appearing and with it inequalities in food consumption, but also here and there specialist gardeners, trying to make a success of village life instead of going to the mines. For instance, at Mubanga, six miles off, was a community of enterprising cattle-owners who had obtained permission in 1924 to build huts apart in the bush so that their small herds might not damage the crops of their neighbours. These two natives were plainly men of unusual initiative who had acquired knowledge of cattle-keeping during their travels down south, and had realised the money-making possibilities of selling milk to the small white community of Kasama. They were later joined by natives from elsewhere who wanted the chance to settle near Kasama, and the community was finally constituted a village by the chief, who appointed one of his sisters, Mubanga—a disreputable and unpopular old lady—as headwoman. She was joined by individualists of all sorts—those of the old régime and those of the new. Her adjutant, a middle-aged man who came from another village, was so much disliked that he had bought himself three goats in order to get the necessary permission from the Government to live outside the village. Near his small settlement was a native convicted of sorcery by the Hunting ordeal.[1] No one would have him in their village, so he borrowed five pounds from a well-to-do nephew at Ndola,

[1] Cf. p. 345.

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

bought cattle, and thus managed to acquire permission to 'build alone'. In 1929 a young tailor at work in a store at Kasama, who had spent some years in Southern Rhodesia with some relatives and had there seen maize cultivated on a large scale on a European farm, joined the community. He had saved money and built himself a four-roomed brick house a few yards outside Mubanga, with six huts around it for dependent relatives. He had then invested in a plough, with which he had put a field of about two acres under cultivation, and had planted maize European fashion. Mubanga village was, in fact, composed of a few individuals of unusual enterprise, much ahead of their contemporaries in outlook; two or three malefactors or unpopular persons living as outcasts near the European town under the cloak of the new economic practices; a successful prostitute, who was paying two men to work her garden for her; a more or less floating population of wage-earners; and a nominee of the Paramount Chief, who constantly tried to keep control over the town natives by appointing one of his own relatives to the position of headman or headwoman.

To conclude, my description of the Bemba attitude to their food-stuffs showed their entire dependence on one staple crop, millet, which they consider as an absolutely essential food, and which has a special social and ritual value for them. In their agricultural life, millet cultivation is the dominant activity. It absorbs their energies and enthusiasm and its demands are put before that of any other crop. Fortunately its cultivation is simple according to the Bemba method, even if the latter is now unsuitable owing to its complete dependence on male labour. The ground cleared for millet is used with a good deal of skill for the planting of other crops in subsequent years even though these old burnt gardens are no longer used to the full owing to decreased man-power.

In growing his subsidiary crops the Bemba show considerable knowledge of the properties of different crops and the use of soils, especially in their cultivation of the village beds. But here sociological factors often militate against successful agriculture. Historical tradition and the native's attitude to different crops determine their willingness to grow them. Village sites may be chosen and moved for non-economic reasons. Various psychological factors prevent the natives from putting their maximum effort into mound-cultivation, and shortage of labour and the breakdown of the tribal education system have pronounced

3: Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1956
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

(*mipashi*) mainly of the matrilineal line, which can be addressed at 769
spirit shrines, the burial places of dead chiefs or in the huts of 775
their individual descendants. They can also be born again with each new child, who acquires a *mupashi* as a guardian spirit, either from his mother's or his father's line, or from the royal dynasty of the territory in which he is born. These guardian spirits can also be inherited, and each dead man or woman is succeeded by a close relative of the same sex who acquires his or her name and guardian spirit.

(ii) *Malignant spirits*, (*fiwa*) who are the spirits of those who died with a feeling of injury because of some violent death, or who left the world with a sense of grievance. *Fiwa* return to strike their descendants with illness or misfortune.

(iii) *Living persons* who can produce good fortune by blessing 789
(*ukupala amate*), which they do chiefly by calling on the ancestral 554
spirits to which they have special right of address; or cursing, which they do through some less specified evil force. The blessings of a chief or a man in authority are particularly potent because of the great spirits such powerful persons have access to. The head of a matrilineage, or an important member of it can also bless in this way. A great social personage who has been injured or not given his due, is feared because he may withhold the blessings of the spirits, or actually pronounce curses (*ukutipa* or *ukulapishya*). The curse is specially important in relation to procreation and [604
childbirth, since the malevolent wishes of the father's sister can 842]
produce barrenness in the woman, or impotence in the man. This is described as 'the great curse'. There are, however, a number of curses which can be used by injured people, who 'throw lightning' or are said to be able to 'throw lions', or who can threaten to curse, if their property is stolen, or when specially distressed by the treatment they have received.

(*b*) Impersonal forces include (i) *Magic* in general (*bwanga*), 789
which is the force contained in the leaves, roots or barks of various 754
trees or shrubs and a number of activating agencies (*fishimba*), such as parts of animals or human beings, which can be used by the specialist magician (*yanga*) for beneficent purposes (health, the production of crops, fertility and success) or for harmful purposes (illness, death or crop failure). *Buloshi* is evil magic or

3: Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1956
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

789
[754] witchcraft, handled by people believed to have supernatural powers.

(ii) *The magic influence of sex, blood and fire* which, when brought
789 into wrongful contact with each other, are thought to be highly
831 dangerous to every Bemba, but particularly to babies and young
372 children, who are believed to be vulnerable to so many dangers; and to chiefs, on whom the prosperity of the land is held to depend. This system of beliefs is extremely complex, and yet it is necessary to try to understand it, if the meaning of the chisungu is to be grasped. The dogma relating sex and fire is the *idée maîtresse* behind most of the ritual behaviour of the Bemba.

834 Briefly speaking, sex relations according to Bemba dogma make
784 a couple 'hot'. In this state it is dangerous for them to approach
783 the ancestral spirits in any rite of prayer or sacrifice; and any chief
622 or headman who attempted to perform such a ceremony without purification would run the risk of bringing disaster on his district.
[793] The chief's shrines are guarded by old women or hereditary priests who keep sex taboos. For the chief to be casual in keeping sex taboos, or to approach his ancestors without purification is 'to spoil the land' (*ukuonaula icalo*).

831 All persons of sex maturity are in fact distinguished by a special
372 term (*wa kuboko*) and are excluded from a number of rites on the
784 ground that they are 'hot', or are likely to be 'hot'. Such people
783 can pollute the fireplace of a hut by touching it, and then a baby
854 fed with gruel cooked on this fire might sicken and die. Parents
846 who do not purify themselves after intercourse run the risk of killing their children by accidentally touching the family hearth. Adulterers are more dangerous still, as they cannot purify themselves since the necessary rite can only be carried out by husband and wife. Small babies and their mothers are therefore kept away from beer drinks where 'bad' people congregate drinking round the fire without care. The baby's gruel is often cooked on a separate hearth and in a separate pot. The art of Bemba motherhood in fact consists very largely in guarding children from danger from fire. A newly born baby is 'unripe' (*mubishi*) and is in a specially precarious position until it has been 'taken' by its parents (*ukupoka umwana*) by an act of intercourse and the lighting of new fire, when it is a few months old. To save the baby, it must be 'brought to the fire' by being held over the flames of a doctored

3: Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1956
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

pleasure and confidence. It seemed to be the ritual acknowledgement of the mother's duty to provide food and to cook for her married daughter for some years after the wedding has taken place.)

The mock bridegrooms suddenly reappeared, pretending this time to be lame old men who could hardly walk. Again the same delighted screams of, 'Here are the *shibwinga*' and the shouted badinage with the mock old men, who came this time with horns of leaves on their heads. The company started singing a song about fetching salt.[1]

The whole procession danced three times round the girls who stood in the centre with downcast eyes. Then the crowd moved off to sing in front of the house of the bridegroom's (classificatory) mother. His own mother lived in a village elsewhere.

The hidden emblems

We then turned back to the chisungu hut where another type of *mbusa* had been hidden in the hut roof. Presents such as copper bangles would have been used in the old days, but on this occasion heads of millet were thought sufficient. The women all pretended to look for the *mbusa* while singing a song. (No. 16)

'*You look for a little snake for me on the roof.*'[2]

The test of maturity

We crowded into the hut in which the fire had been extinguished preparatory to its ritual relighting later in the day. Two large water pots were set on the floor and into each was put one of the

[1] *Subsequent interpretations.* The explanations were particularly contradictory in this case, and they were instructively so. A youngish and knowledgeable *nacimbusa* said the horns were to keep off witchcraft. They were to imitate the horns of the witch-doctor. The mock bridegrooms pretended to be old to show that the girls were to learn 'to grow up with their husbands and never to despise them'. An old woman said, 'Yes, the women are imitating the witch-doctors, those who know how to give parenthood (*bufyashi*)'. R.B.M. explained, 'It is to teach the bridegroom that even though he is old and tired he must look after the girl. Also, however ridiculous he is made to appear in the eyes of the world he must still do his duty'. A young girl, obviously considering the question for the first time, said 'It is good for a husband to be old. It is nice to marry a young man, but then he only goes off to the mines and leaves you alone. An old husband will stay behind and make you a garden.'

[2] A.C. 'You must plan for dangers ahead, i.e. the snake unexpectedly in the roof.'

769 Spirits are also worshipped, as has been mentioned, at the chiefs' relic huts, at the sites of dead chiefs' villages, which are revered as 778 spirit centres, and at remarkable natural objects such as caves and waterfalls (*ngulu*) which are also thought to be spirit centres. Major chiefs are buried in a sacred grove guarded with great care by a priest, the [782] *shimwalule*. This is the home of the most powerful tribal spirits and an animal used to be sacrificed here on the rare occasions when drought was [787] threatened. The spirits of the chiefs also manifest themselves in the presence of possessed men and women who prophesy and heal. Ancestral spirits are approached by the man or woman who has succeeded to their name and guardian spirit, that is to say, the head of a small local lineage, a headman or a chief.

769 Ancestral spirits are addressed after a ritual sex act between the officiant and his wife, followed by ceremonial purification. The spirits 782 are addressed by name and some form of sacrifice, e.g. beer, cloth, flour 783 and chickens, is offered to them.

(c) MAGIC AND WITCHCRAFT

789 Bemba and Bisa believe in the potency of *bwanga* which may be translated as "magic". Bemba magical rites depend for the most part on medicine (*muti*), usually part of a plant or tree, sometimes with the addition of energizing charms giving potency to the medicine. Words are sometimes used but, as with the Azande, there is less insistence on and less importance attached to the spell than to the rite and the medicines. It is the magician (*Ng'anga*) who procures and uses the medicine and from whom it may be purchased. To ensure effectiveness the *Ng'anga* must invoke *Lesa*, without whose consent the medicines are thought to be ineffectual.

Magic is used for general protective purposes - to ensure fertility, good health and luck, to give staying power to food. In the economic sphere magic seems to be used less among the Bemba than the Bisa. Richards suggests that the greater development of the ancestral cult among the former is the reason for this.(1)

754 Magic is also used in divination. The commonest form of divination is the rubbing of an axe over a skin until it sticks in answer to a ques- 787 tion, and boiling of medicine in a pot until the mixture bubbles over one side or the other side. Another characteristic form of Bemba divination is the hunting ritual used to ascertain the cause of a person's death, according to whether a male or female animal is first driven into the hunting nets. This rite can be used as a preliminary test for witchcraft. In the old days the *lilamfia*, or war fetish, originally obtained from the Lunda chiefs near Lake Mweru was employed. This was a horn placed on a spike which was [278] thought only to work if smeared with the blood of a human victim. *Mwafi*, the poison used as a test for witchcraft from the Southern Sudan to Southern Rhodesia, was used by the senior chiefs in this area.

754 Evil magic, or sorcery, was distinguished as *buloshi*, a term which covers witchcraft, in the sense of inborn power, as well as the manipulation

(1) Richards, 6, 1939, pp.356, 187.

754 of magical forces in sorcery. The *mulooshi* is a man who kills without rhyme or reason, an enemy of society who kills from a distance, who is associated with black birds and who steals parts of the body from newly dug graves.(1) Enemies may also be killed by the use of medicine, either apparently by an evilly disposed person or by the *Ng'anga* who may be employed to defend someone who believes he is attacked.(2)

831 372 *Sex and Fire.* Characteristic of this group of peoples is the series of beliefs associated with the magic potency of sex when used according to certain rules, and, connected with this, the danger of the pollution of domestic fires or the fires of chiefs by contact with adulterers or evil livers. Such beliefs are the basis of the multiplication of small protective rites associated with chieftainship, the bringing-up of children, and the girls' initiation ceremony.(3)

SOME IMPORTANT RITUALS

788 241 The most important ceremonies carried out amongst the Bemba are as follows:-

(1) *Economic Rites.* At the time of the firing of the bush the chief or headman places an axe at the head of his bed at night or, in the case of a chief, in the relic shrine. Sowing ceremonies at the Paramount's capital used to be elaborate, but are now reduced to the placing of seeds in the relic shrines; similar ceremonies are done by headmen. The first-fruits rites, when the tasting of the new crops takes place, were also formerly elaborate among the Bemba. They are still carried out in an abbreviated form at the capital, and headmen place in their small spirit huts portions of each new crop.

766 782 (2) *Ceremonial in Chieftainship.* The most elaborate forms of ceremonial amongst the Bemba are those that surround the burial of a dead chief, the installation of his successor and the moving of his village. In the old days the death of a Paramount Chief was concealed for a few days while his followers fled from the capital and the sacred relics were moved to a place of safety. The ritual buriers then took charge and dried the body and covered it with a sauce made of beans, carefully preserving the toe and finger nails. After a year the corpse was carried round the Paramount's territory and human victims were sacrificed on each spot where the body rested at night. The body was then carried across the Chambasi river where it was received by the *shimwalule* who carried it into the sacred grove. The favourite wives of the chief and some of his slaves were put into the grave to hold the body of the *Citimukulu* and were stifled as the earth was filled in. Although cattle are not kept in the area, the body was wrapped in the skin of an ox.

643 The installation of a chief is a similarly complex process, in which all the *bakabilo* and *bafingo* play their part. Important elements were the transfer of the sacred relics to the new capital, the lighting of the chief's new fire, and the installation of his head wife. Details of this form of ceremonial are not available from the associated tribes, but it is certain that

(1) For some comments on the relation between witchcraft and psychopathology, see Davidson, 1949.
(2) Richards, 2, 1935. (3) Richards, 7, 1940.

pants from the contemplation of their loss he makes jokes at the expense of the dead man and behaves in a fashion which in other circumstances would be considered outrageous and would not be tolerated.

Kazembes considered themselves as potentially immortal; thus the death of a Kazembe was attributed to neglect of magical precautions against witchcraft.(1) According to Pinto, slaves and wives of a dead Kazembe were sacrificed and a ten-day period of authorized licence followed during which robberies were allowed.(2)

It was believed that the living and the dead could communicate. Life after death resembled that led while alive.(3)

RELIGIOUS AND MAGICAL BELIEFS AND RITUAL

The concept of the high-god Lesa is common to the Bemba-speaking peoples. *Lesa*, the creator, is regarded rather as a nature force than a personal deity and is not the object of an organised cult. He manifests himself in thunder, lightning, and the rainbow and can kill by lightning or epidemics, but generally interferes little.

The *ngulu*, nature spirits residing in animals, trees, stones, hills, caves, ponds, waterfalls, can bring good weather and crops and are prayed to in an emergency. This cult is of non-Lunda origin and has probably come from the Chishinga, Lungu and Bemba country. Most of the dwelling-places of these spirits are found on the escarpment hills and on the plateau. The *mfumu ya mipashi* (chiefs of spirits), which can enter and possess people making them dance, are local deities whose beneficient activity is confined to the village or district.

When the general well-being of the community was concerned the spirits of dead Kazembes, *masamos*, were consulted and presented with offerings of cassava, beer and goats. Kazembes were buried at a place north-east of the old capital with which it was connected by a broad pathway(4) still discernible. Each had a shrine which was tended by a guardian-priest, *mwine masamo*,(5) whose office was hereditary. These keepers of the royal graves sought the advice of the oracle when war was contemplated and invoked the assistance of the spirits.(6) The River Lualaba, in which Kazembe the founder of the dynasty rests, was held in veneration. Processions went there annually at harvesting time. It is said that Keleka was the first Kazembe who failed to lead the procession in person, and the famine and smallpox epidemic which later occurred were attributed to his negligence.(7) The Kazembe is said to have been the highest religious authority.(8)

Carved wooden figures representing dead ancestors (*nkisi*) were kept in special huts and received offerings of beer, cassava, flour, hemp and tobacco.(9) Kazembe had several such figures, some named after dead chiefs, which were carried before the army in battle.(10)

(1) Valdez, II, p.242.
(2) Burton, p.128.
(3) Valdez, op.cit., p.243.
(4) Valdez, II, p.231.
(5) Burton, p.103.
(6) Valdez, op.cit., p.248.
(7) Valdez, II, p.257.
(8) ibid., p.243.
(9) Livingstone, I, p.353.
(10) ibid.

7: Richards E-5 (1930-1934) 1940 FQ5 Bemba FQ5

differ only in degree. All are said to look after their people, to 'work the land', and, with reference to their supernatural powers, to 'spit blessings over the land' (*ukufunga mate*). Their political duties consist in the administration of their capitals and also of their territories as a whole. A large *umusumba* means plenty of coming and going, enough workers for joint enterprises, a large panel of advisers for court cases, many messengers to keep in touch with the surrounding villages—in short, the possibility of keeping the tribal machine running. To maintain and even augment such a community by his popularity and his reputation for generosity is one of the chief's important political tasks. He has also to keep contact with the people widely dispersed over his *icalo* and to appoint new headmen, amalgamate old villages, and decide as to the selection of heirs to old titles. On his success in these last duties the integration of his people as a political unit largely depends.

As a judicial authority, the chief presides over his court with advisers selected from his village, and in the old days he alone could hear charges of witchcraft and, in the case of the greater territorial chiefs, put the accused to the poison ordeal (*mwafi*). In the economic sphere, he initiates agricultural activities by performing the customary ceremony before each begins; he makes big gardens with the aid of tribute labour from which he is able to fill large granaries and thus find the wherewithal to feed his following; he controls directly certain fishing and hunting enterprises: and he criticizes and directs the gardening work of his own villagers.[1]

The ritual duties of a chief consist in the observation of the taboos for the protection of his own person and the safety of the sacred relics at his disposal, and the carrying out of a number of rites for the sake of his whole *icalo*—in the case of the paramount, for the whole tribe. These last consist of economic rites, tree-cutting, sowing, and first-fruit ceremonies, those performed in case of national calamity, and for success in war in the old days. He was formerly bound to protect the people from witches and used to employ a special doctor at his court to destroy, by burning, the bodies of those found guilty of this offence.

In the old days the chief organized military expeditions,

[1] cf. my *Land, Labour, and Diet in Northern Rhodesia* (1939), chap. xiii, for a full account of the chief's economic powers.

9: Richards E-5 (1930-1934) 1935 FQ5 Bemba FQ5

A MODERN MOVEMENT OF WITCH-FINDERS

AUDREY I. RICHARDS

ALL over present-day Africa witch-finders seem to appear, as it were from nowhere, flourish for a time, and then disappear. Either it is some individual of unusual personality in his community who announces a magic remedy for human sufferings, and so obtains a following, or else it is a more or less organized band of wonder-workers which crosses the border from some neighbouring territory with all the kudos attached to the foreign and the strange. Among these latter the celebrated *Bamucapi*, who recently swept from Nyasaland into Northern Rhodesia and later reached Southern Rhodesia and the Congo, are an interesting example. The actual origin of this movement is difficult to discover, but I watched it at its height in the Bemba country of N.E. Rhodesia in the summer of 1934, and I want in this article to describe very shortly the methods of these witch-finders, and to try to account for their success.[1]

The *Bamucapi* themselves were for the most part young and dressed in European clothing. They went about the country in ones and twos, usually paying local assistants to help them. Their leader, they said, was one Kamwende of Mlanje in Nyasaland, but he was spoken of as a person of mythical attributes rather than as an organizer in actual control. The procedure of the witch-finders was impressive. Arrived at a village, they summoned the headman, who was bidden to gather his people together and to kill and cook a chicken for the ritual meal of which all were to partake. Once assembled the men and women were lined up in separate files, and passed one by one behind the back of the witch-finder, who caught their reflections in a small round mirror by a turn of his wrist. By his image in the glass it was claimed that a sorcerer could be immediately detected, and thus discovered, he was immediately called upon to yield up his horns (*nsengo*), a term which included all harmful magic charms. Wonderful stories were told of the perspicacity of the witch-finders. Horns wilfully concealed were

[1] During this time Professor Malinowski, then on a tour of inspection of his pupils' fields of study, visited my area, worked himself on this problem, and generously allowed me to add his notes to my own.

9: Richards E-5 (1930-1934) 1935 FQ5 Bemba FQ5

apparently always unmasked. 'Look under the roof of his granary,' the *Bamucapi* would cry in case of a denial by the sorcerer, and there the hidden danger would be immediately brought to light. 'We know they made no mistakes', was the significant comment of natives, 'because the men and women they spotted as sorcerers were people we had been afraid of all along!'

But with the detection of the sorcerer a cure was provided. Each man and woman drank a sip of the famous *mucapi* medicine—a fine red powder which gave a soapy solution when shaken with water in a bottle—the name of the witch-finders being said to come from the Cinyanja word *kucapa*, to rub or wash clothes. For this medicine the claim of the *Bamucapi* was staggering. It was nothing less than the complete removal of witchcraft from the territory. A man who had drunk the *mucapi* medicine, and then returned to his evil practices, was liable to instant death—a grisly death in which he was to swell to enormous proportions, his limbs crinkled with dropsy, and his body too heavy to be carried to the grave. Nor could a cunning sorcerer escape by refusing to pass in front of the magic mirror. He would merely be caught at a kind of second coming of the founder of the movement, who was to return beating a mysterious drum outside each village at night. At its sound all witches and wizards as yet undetected would be compelled to follow to the graveyard where their crimes would be finally unmasked. Some told also of the coming of a mythical woman with one breast in front and one behind. The good she would suckle in front, while the wicked would find themselves following willynilly behind. Such stories were told and retold in the villages with the myth of the original Kamwende, who, it was said, had received his revelation in the grave from which he had been resurrected after two days, with one eye, one arm, and one leg powerless, but with the secret of the *mucapi* medicine and the power to resist poisons of all kinds.

As a secondary object the *Bamucapi* sold protective charms, pinches of powder sewn up in small cloth bags. For 3*d.* charms could be bought against wild beasts and snakes, for 6*d.* powder to protect the gardens from animal pests, for 6*d.* a charm for luck and success, and for 5*s.*, it was rumoured, a charm for winning the favour of the local Government official. 'But you can see for yourself', my informant added, 'that very few natives have had as much money to spend as that!'

9: Richards E-5 (1930-1934) 1935 FQ5 Bemba FQ5

791 The success of the movement was from the first overwhelming. It
203 completely captured the people's imagination, and created its myths
as it spread. From hut to hut of an evening men shouted the latest
● 754 exploits of the witch-finders—the number of horns found in such and
such a village, or the people miraculously saved from snakes or lions.
The Government, which at first allowed the movement to proceed
unchecked, was universally praised. 'This is the best thing the
Bwanas have ever done for us,' many natives told me. 'Now at last
[797] they are allowing us to free our country from witchcraft.' Adverse
criticism of missions which refused to allow their Christians to drink
the medicine was frequent. The suspicion, and often the accusations
of witchcraft commonly made against unpopular Christian teachers,
seemed at last to be publicly substantiated. 'If they have nothing to
fear,' the natives said, 'why are they afraid to put themselves to the
[799] test?' At the cross-roads outside each village was a pile of horns and
other magic objects—horns which many missionaries had tried un-
successfully for years to remove and forbid.

791 The cause of the success of this movement is therefore of consider-
171 able interest, the more so since it is in many ways typical of many such
organizations of witch-finders which have sprung up in other parts of
121 Africa. We have to ask ourselves first, then, why the methods of the
Bamucapi appealed to the natives so strongly? To what fears did they
seem to provide such an immediate and universal panacea? These are
questions that cannot be answered by a study of the ritual and myths
of the *Bamucapi* as an end in themselves. To assess the strength of the
movement in any particular area we have to consider it against a back-
ground of tribal structure and belief.

791 In the Bemba country, for instance, it may be said that novelty was
enough to account for the success of any native movement, religious
157 or secular. The Babemba are known to be unusually credulous and
unstable in temperament, the first to adopt and discard anything new.
Nyasaland, the reputed home of the movement, has also a high reputa-
tion among Rhodesian natives as the land of high wages and educa-
tional facilities, and most of the clerks employed in the country are
791 still of Nyasaland origin. Further, the Babemba are among those
177 African peoples with whom every form of Europeanism is a positive
cult. The *Bamucapi* appealed because they presented a dogma that

9: Richards E-5 (1930-1934) 1935 FQ5 Bemba FQ5

satisfied native belief, while their ritual contained many superficial features of the white civilization. The witch-finders came as well-dressed young men, not as wrinkled old native doctors (*yanga*) in greasy bark-cloth. They worked in the open and lined up the natives after the manner of an official taking a census. They sold their medicine in stoppered chemist's bottles rather than in dirty old horns pulled from a skin bag. Their teaching, too, was an interesting blend of the old and the new. Their power, they said, came from Lesa, the High God on whom the *yanga* calls when preparing his medicine, the term being used by the missionary also to describe the Christian God. But curiously enough the efficacy of the medicine depended on the keeping of a number of taboos which are deeply embedded in native belief, such as, for instance, the taboo on a man having intercourse with a woman in the bush. Some natives said that Marya also helped the *Bamucapi*, but added quickly not the Marya of the Catholic missions, but another one; for there is no doubt the movement was anti-mission as a whole. Phrases reminiscent of Christian teaching were also used. The witch-finders addressed the villagers with a preliminary sermon, a technique quite foreign to the native *yanga*, and stressed such ideas as the washing of sins. Kamwende, it will be remembered, descended into the grave and rose again, and was expected to reappear at a second coming. It is interesting, too, that the *Bamucapi* followed the distinctions made by the Roman Catholic missions in the classification of native medicines. Those that contained medicine (*muti*) only were permitted, but those that contained what the Babemba call a *cisimba*, an activating principle, such as an eagle's claw or the bone of a squirrel, were to be forbidden.

But over and above the attraction of novelty there were deeper causes behind the success of the *Bamucapi*. The witch-finders claimed, as I stated, to remove the dangerous weapons of the sorcerer. We have to ask ourselves then, whether the fear of witchcraft is one which dominates native belief. Is black magic, in the sense of a definite ritual actually performed by a man in the belief that it will harm his enemy, very constantly performed among the Babemba?

An analysis of the horns collected by the *Bamucapi* throws an interesting light on this question. I took possession in one instance of the complete heap of horns and magic charms, 139 in all, which had been

9: Richards E-5 (1930-1934) 1935 FQ5 Bemba FQ5

found in a village of some 70 huts. These lay in a tumbled heap at the cross-roads outside the village, surrounded by knots of people, mostly young men and women, murmuring under their breath at the horrors from which they had been saved. These onlookers seemed to assume to a man that the horns were dangerous objects without exception. Excited comment identified this and that small object as coming from a dead man's grave, as almost certainly part of the bone of a sorcerer's victim, or as soaked in the blood of a dead child.

The actual analysis of these horns was therefore interesting. The collection included 45 small duiker horns, admitted by most to be used as containers for charms or medicines (*muti*) usually of a harmless type such as hunting magic. Sixteen were the horns of big buck such as roan antelope, the usual containers for medicine good and bad, and even for snuff or any other substance which needs to be carried in a stoppered vessel. It would be difficult, informants admitted, to tell a container of black magic from a simple box of snuff. Of the rest of the charms, 17 were small gourds (*misafi*) used as containers for snuff or oil with a wooden stopper fixed in the narrow end. In such tiny gourds, magic of good luck or popularity is often carried (*muti wa cisense*). Thirty-six more charms were the small cloth bags (*mikoba*) in which medicines of various sorts are sewn to be worn round the owner's neck, the *Bamucapi* themselves supplying their medicine in this form. Such medicines would be nearly always protective to the owner and not destructive to somebody else. To cut a long story short then, out of a collection of 135 horns which had drawn cries of horror and execration from the passers-by, 125 were mere containers, possibly filled with nothing more than the ordinary household remedies which the English mother keeps against coughs and digestive ailments.

Of the remainder of the horns, some were admittedly doubtful or definitely suspicious. Five were wristlets made of the skin of the water lizard or the tree iguana, which are considered ill-omened animals. Nine were bush-buck horns, and this buck (*cisongo*) has a very bad reputation among the Babemba. The animal is believed to be a *cibanda* or evil spirit, and is tabooed to chiefs, to pregnant women, and others. By such a horn a sorcerer would be able to lay the spirit of his victim, sending it flying through the air by night 'glowing like a white man's torch' (*lulebanga torchi*) to the grave of the recently buried

9: Richards E-5 (1930-1934) 1935 FQ5 Bemba FQ5

man, where it would be found sticking upright on the mound in the morning full of grave-earth, and hence the injured spirit of the dead.

Some of the other objects the natives condemned in spite of all evidence of common sense, so much had they made up their minds already as to the horrors they expected to find. The parietal bone of a monkey recently shot in a garden raid was sworn to be that of a baby. The skull of a vulture with its characteristic beak was identified as an owl by natives who are good naturalists, since sorcerers are known to prowl at night with owl-like birds (*ntitimusi*) to steal grain from the granaries of others. A polished bit of wood was dubbed the wrist-bone of a lion by one of the best-known hunters in the district. Lastly, the two horns which raised the greatest outcry were *fimango*, or horns specially prepared by the *nganga* of a chief in old days to lay the spirits of sorcerers burnt after death by the *mwafi* poison ordeal; that is to say, horns which are specially made to protect people against witchcraft. These objects, filled with medicines to attract evil spirits, the ends netted in and covered with red dye and black beads for the same purpose, acted, as it were, as lightning conductors, kept outside a chief's village to attract the evil spirits to the ground. *Fimango* were also used in the most important form of divination known as '*kutinta*' practised by the *nganga* of the chief. The main protection of the native against witchcraft in the old days was therefore cheerfully discarded on the heap at the bidding of a couple of quacks! In fact the *Bamucapi* depended a good deal for their effects on the ignorance of the young of the use of Bemba magic. Their own ignorance on the subject, and their lack of knowledge of the language, was of no account, since they defended the throwing away of a charm admittedly harmless by declaring it contained a *cisimba* unseen to the ordinary man.

Our examination of a typical heap of horns has therefore shown us that only 11 out of 135 horns were admitted by every one to be undeniably bad destructive magic, that is to say, prepared for the injury of others. For the rest, 2 were actually protective magic intended to save the whole community against witchcraft, while the majority were containers of medicine, some curative, and some mere charms for success, dangerous only in so far as success could be considered to be obtained at the expense of others. It would appear thus to be part of the skill of the *Bamucapi* to create the sense of danger from which they

9: Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1935 FQ5 Bemba FQ5

789 754 791

professed to save the people so miraculously. That is to say, they drew out the maximum number of charms from a village by convincing each owner that detection was inevitable, either now or in a mythical future, and that even harmless charms were better out of the way. Besides, never was immunity against the charge of witchcraft secured with such ease—a penny a time and 'they give you change'! Old people who had at one time or another been accused of witchcraft, walked miles in search of the *Bamucapi* in order to drink the medicine, and so be publicly passed as free from suspicion. The pile of horns at the cross-roads naturally grew, and its very height proved to the rest of the world the dangers from which it had been saved.

754 Are we then to believe that the sorcerer proper does not exist among the Babemba; or does he exist only, as Evans-Pritchard suggests may be the case, among the Azande, not in fact, but in native opinion?[1] We know that primitive peoples are alike in their almost universal belief that death and disaster are due to supernatural agencies. They differ, on the other hand, greatly as to the proportion of human ills which they attribute to hostile fellow beings with supernatural powers, and that which they believe to be inflicted by supernatural beings, angry spirits and the like, themselves.

000 Some communities, that is to say, are more witch-ridden than others. The Trobriand islander, Malinowski tells us, considers 'every death, without exception, as an act of sorcery'.[2] Similarly, a neighbouring Melanesian people, the Dobu islanders, believe 'that all good luck is due to one's ritual being stronger than the ritual of others, which is aimed at results contrary to one's own aims'.[3] Of the Babemba this is emphatically not so. They believe good and bad fortune to be due to a variety of causes of which witchcraft is only one.

The place of the sorcerer in the community also varies tremendously. In some cases he practises his art, as Malinowski says, 'almost openly',[4] the magic of healing and the magic of destruction being vested in one practitioner, who acts in the interests of the man who employs him. In such a community 'there can be no doubt that acts of sorcery are

[1] Evans-Pritchard, 'Sorcery in Native Opinion', *Africa*, vol. vi, no. 1.
[2] Malinowski, *Sexual Life of Savages*, Routledge, London, 1929, p. 137.
[3] Fortune, *Sorcerers of Dobu*, Routledge, London, 1932, p. 101.
[4] Malinowski, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, Routledge, London, 1922, p. 75.

9: Richards E-5 (1930-1934) 1935 FQ5 Bemba FQ5

really carried out by those who believe themselves to possess black powers'. In other areas, the possession of powers of black magic is inherited in certain families and openly recognized. In other tribes, among them the Babemba, no witch-doctor will ever admit that he possesses any magic of destruction, although he may grudgingly allow that he can sometimes protect those who are attacked by the spell of a sorcerer. In this particular the natives believe that they differ from neighbouring tribes, for I heard of a man who had made a journey to the country of the Batabwa to the North-West, where he said black magic could be openly bought and sold.

This, then, is the question we shall have to ask ourselves in trying to assess the strength of the *Bamucapi*. In accounting for failing luck and disaster, what sum of human ills is debited to the sorcerers' account? It is obvious that the problem is one of practical importance to the administrator. If a native announces that his child has been killed by the evil magic of a fellow human being, he is probably punished with a legal penalty, but if the same native volunteers his bereavement to be due to the anger of his dead great-grandfather, to him an equally credible statement, he will merely be received with a tolerant smile.

Now a characteristic of Bemba belief is the number of different causes to which human ills may be attributed, and of these witchcraft is at first sight not the most important. A man may suffer harm (*a*) because of the anger of his ancestral spirits (*mipaʃī*) to whom he owes certain duties of respect, and who are ultimately responsible for punishing any infringement of tribal law. The spirit of a commoner will punish members of his own particular family, though admittedly not mortally, while the *mupaʃī* of a chief may inflict disaster on the whole land, either in the form of general bad luck, or some dramatic disaster such as a locust plague: (*b*) through the vengeance of a haunting spirit (*cisua*), the avenging ghost of an ancestor who died neglected, injured, or wrongfully accused by his relatives: (*c*) through the neglect of some important ritual, such, for instance, as that protecting the purity of the household fire; or the breaking of some moral rule such as adultery committed in special circumstances: (*d*) through punishment sent by a chief's *mupaʃī* as the result of a human curse (*kulapiʃya*) when the individual concerned cannot find out who has injured or stolen from him, and calls for divine aid. In all these cases there is one common

9: Richards E-5 (1930-1934) 1935 FQ5 Bemba FQ5

753 769 626 feature. Punishment is only inflicted by the supernatural power when it is deserved. The religious dogma follows strictly the tribal morality and gives it its sanction. It stresses particularly that basic sentiment of Bemba society—the attitude of a man to authority in general and in particular to his chief. *Mipaſi* are injured if not given proper respect, while the whole land suffers if the chief defaults. So also in the case of the avenging *cisu*, it is the failure to honour and stand by your relations which is punished, the typical case always given being that of the old mother who dies of starvation and neglect. Here again the *cisu* [776] may not even return and haunt the living without the permission of Lesa, the High-God, and only a spirit suffering under a legitimate grievance is allowed to avenge. The curse by the name of a dead chief will only light on the real offender.

626 787 To sum up, according to Bemba dogma most misfortune is believed to be due to wrong-doing, and in particular transgression of the rules of respect to authority. The cause of the disaster can be ascertained by divination, itself a mechanism socially approved and carried out by a reputable character, the *senga*. The remedy can be procured by the purchase of medicine, by the performance of a laborious rite, and perhaps, most important of all, by the public admission of guilt.

• 754 In this apparently logical and orderly system there is, according to theory, only one incalculable element—the sorcerer (*mulosi*) who kills without rhyme or reason, for the sake of doing harm. The *balosi* are enemies of society and running counter to its laws. They actually start their careers of crime by committing some outrageous act, such as father-daughter incest, or the murder of a baby of their own clan. They have various mythical attributes. They can make themselves invisible; kill at a distance; send magic birds to steal food from their enemies; and of course perform secret rites and possess and sell evil [828] medicines. Now it is obvious that such sorcerers are actually non-existent, though their mythical attributes are readily credited to unpopular people of dour or difficult temperaments, bad mixers in the American sense, bad sharers, or persons who seem to be winning 754 unusual success at others' expense. I would not be bold enough to say 789 that no rites of evil magic are performed in Bemba country, or that 578 there do not exist here and there individuals who believe themselves to possess such powers. But it is the reflection of the *balosi* belief in

9: Richards E-5 (1930-1934) 1935 FQ5 Bemba FQ5

the widespread use of protective magic which is, I believe, the important practical issue. In an atmosphere of suspicion and hatred, natives will believe themselves forced to buy charms from the reputable *ganga* of the neighbourhood, or very commonly from a witch-doctor of another tribe, to protect themselves (*kufiliko mubili*), such charms being naturally viewed with alarm by others. In such an atmosphere of mistrust, too, ordinary magic of success, hunting, and agricultural charms, or those for luck in personal relations, such as formed the bulk of the horns on our heap, assume a sinister aspect. Beauty magic bought by a young unmarried girl is not a dangerous possession, but the same charm purchased by one of two jealous co-wives would be considered a hostile act. All magic of luck and self-protection becomes dangerous, that is to say, just in so far as the success it brings is believed to hurt another. Protective magic, like protective armaments, increases the sense of insecurity it was bought to end. Herein lies the danger, especially as contact with white civilization has, in many cases, actually increased the use of such charms and counter-charms.

A little consideration will in fact show us, what is not at first sight evident, that a change in the native belief in sorcery inevitably follows changes in social structure. The strength of the fear of witchcraft in any community obviously depends on the nature of its tribal institutions.

It is clear that the strength of the belief in the power of sorcery in any community depends on the nature of its tribal institutions and, in particular, the type of authority exercised, and its legal machinery. Its incidence will vary with its system of social grouping, local or kinship, and the absence or presence of emotional tension between these groups. To explain by a contrast between two widely different cultures, the Trobriand Islander is afraid his chief may bewitch him, and hence magic acts in this community as a conservative force backing up his authority. Witchcraft has its appointed place in the whole political system. The Mubemba, living under a far more autocratic and powerful chief, says simply, 'Why should a chief bewitch a commoner since he can so easily beat him or mutilate him?' Evans-Pritchard, in fact, suggests that we shall find an interesting correlation between the morphology of magic and the type of political system in a primitive society.[1]

[1] Evans-Pritchard, 'The Morphology and Function of Magic', *American Anthropologist*, Oct. 1929.

9: Richards E-5 (1930-1934) 1935 FQ5 Bemba FQ5

754 182 121 The presence or absence of legal machinery for settling grievances obviously also affects the incidence of magic throughout the society. The Melanesian often has no way of venting his grievance against his fellows except by the practice of the magic of hate. The Mubemba, in common with most other Bantu peoples, can obtain redress in a legal court. He brings a case where the former would besiege the sorcerer for more and more spells.

Again there are patterns of culture in which two social groups are legally bound together in a network of obligations mutually burdensome, and providing perpetual cause for emotional tension. Two individuals may be placed by society in a position of constant rivalry from the start. In such an atmosphere suspicion and charges of witchcraft flourish. I will instance only from the same two Melanesian societies, the relation in Trobriand matrilineal society between a man's heir, his maternal nephew, and his son; or in Dobu the hostility between the groups united in marriage (*sara*) between which the fear of witchcraft is an absolutely dominating dread. Among the Babemba differences in the marriage and kinship system do not provide groupings with interests so sharply contrasted, although the co-wives in a society where the women have never really accepted polygamy as an institution, or the rival heirs to great chieftainships, are always suspected of bewitching each other. But I believe conflicting elements in the society have lately increased.

This is, in fact, the crux of the whole matter. Missionaries all over Africa are teaching a religion which casts out fear, but economic and social changes have so shattered tribal institutions and moral codes that the result of white contact is in many cases an actual increase in the dread of witchcraft, and therefore in the whole incidence of magic throughout the group.

754 182 121 622 In Bemba society the position of the chief has materially altered. One of his functions was formerly the administration of the poison ordeal (*mwafi*) to those accused of sorcery, and this gave an ultimate sense of security to the community at large. Now he no longer performs this duty, and his subjects know, moreover, that they cannot charge a witch in a legal court, black or white. 'No one will help us now', said an informant about the *Bamwafi* movement, 'unless we help ourselves.' It must be remembered, too, that divination, itself an

9: Richards E-5 (1930-1934) 1935 FQ5 Bemba FQ5

essential part of the native system of fixing guilt, can no longer be publicly practised. It exists, but is discredited, and in this transition stage its loss has certainly robbed the native of some of his old moral certainties.

Further, with alterations in the sanctions for the power of the chief —his wealth, military supremacy, and the belief in his supernatural powers—that attitude to authority, on which, as we saw, tribal morality so largely depended, has been rudely shaken, and with it the whole system of beliefs in supernatural punishment for wrong-doing. Some natives are abandoning tribal rules because they find them burdensome; and some are living in conditions where it is impossible to carry them out—perhaps working at a mine too far to be able to care for their kinsmen or to carry out certain religious rites. Other natives again, many of them Christians, are caught between clashing moralities. In either case the majority are suffering, I believe, from a perpetual sense of guilt, expressing itself in a constant anxiety for some kind of supernatural defence. Nowhere did I feel this more strongly than in the most civilized part of Northern Rhodesia, the copper belt. Here a Bemba woman no longer feels it necessary to keep the wearisome taboos for the protection of her household fire, but just for that reason she feels herself bound to pay as much as she can for protective charms to save the life of her child—'just in case'. The influence of wage-earning is here again all-powerful. Money seems to the urban native his only asset in this insecure world. By it he can in effect exchange a belief in a system of ancestral spirits who demand respect, the performance of exacting ceremonial, and the keeping of tribal morality for safety bought on a hard cash basis open to all who have money, whatever their position in the society. What wonder, then, that he rushes to the seller of charms? And wherever protective magic is freely bought and sold there is an atmosphere of mutual suspicion between individuals. The fear of witchcraft increases, and witch-finders flourish.

Again, social grouping has been altered by white contact, with, as a transition stage, new causes of hostility between the individual components. In villages near European settlements, natives from other areas have intruded on original kinship units because they want to live near their work. 'We don't feel safe in this village. There are so many strangers here', an old woman said to me in a village near

9: Richards E-5 (1930-1934) 1935 FQ5 Bemba FQ5

754 Kasama. In the mines it is the tribal admixture which is, I believe, at
182 the basis of the natives' positive obsession by the fear of witchcraft.
121 Each tribe credits the other with absolutely diabolical powers.
171 Paralysed by the fear of the unknown, what can they do but buy more charms? Moreover, wage-earning in a large industrial undertaking provides opportunity for advance through individual initiative, and hence jealousy is rife. I know few successful clerks raised above the heads of their fellows who have not been accused at one time or another of sorcery. 'How else did he gain the bwana's favour?' is the natural question. And it is in the ranks of such men that, paradoxically enough, the most money is spent in the purchase of protective charms. I know of one ex-Government clerk in the Kasama area who had spent a Government bonus of £15 on the purchase of protective magic from a neighbouring tribe. Jealousy of the man who has adapted himself more quickly than his fellows to Europeanism is, I believe, inevitable in this transition stage.

791 Here, then, we must leave our study of the *Bamucapi* movement. We
121 have seen that part of the success of these charlatans was due to their
754 clever blend of the old and the new, and I believe that such a combination will be almost invariably found in modern witch-finder move-
789 ments. Added to this we must reckon the cleverness of a technique that drew from a village its harmless as well as its dangerous horns, and by the multiplicity of charms thus produced increased the sense of the risk the whole community had run. An analysis of the horns collected led us to doubt the existence of sorcerers proper in the community, a doubt confirmed by a study of Bemba belief as to the supernatural causes of death and disaster. But native belief in witchcraft, and the widespread use of protective magic and counter-charms of all kinds, was confirmed. This latter I believe to have been actually increased by contact with the white civilization, and the resultant economic and social changes in Northern Rhodesia. Hence follows the success of modern movements of witch-finders, movements which are, I believe, inevitable as a product of violent changes in tribal organization and belief.

AUDREY I. RICHARDS.